

Contact: Matthew Simmons

Adam Saal

Bill Klingbeil

SRT Motorsports - SRT Viper ALMS Race Advance - Round 7 - Grand Prix of Baltimore Presented by SRT

August 26, 2013, Auburn Hills, Mich. -

THE VIPER GTS-R IS BACK IN 2013

- SRT Motorsports will field two SRT Viper GTS-Rs in Saturday's race at the 2.02-mile circuit, the seventh event on the 2013 American Le Mans Series presented by Tequila Patron schedule.
- The driver lineup for Saturday's race: Kuno Wittmer and Jonathan Bomarito in the No. 93 Pennzoil Ultra SRT Viper GTS-R; Marc Goossens and Dominik Farnbacher in the No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R.
- SRT Motorsports' No. 91 team – Marc Goossens and Dominik Farnbacher – claimed the GT Class win at Road America on Aug. 11, the first victory for Viper in ALMS competition since Dec. 31, 2000. It was the first ALMS win for Goossens and fifth for Farnbacher.
- SRT Motorsports competed at Baltimore in 2012, one of four events entered during the year in preparation for a full 2013 ALMS season. The No. 93 finished 11th.

QUICK FACTS

- You can follow the SRT Viper GTS-R team throughout the 2013 season. The third of a multi-part series is now available on youtube.com/driveSRT.
- Chrysler Group's Street and Racing Technology (SRT) brand returns as the presenting sponsor for all races this weekend on the streets of Baltimore – the Grand Prix of Baltimore presented by SRT.
- The 2013 SRT Viper GTS-R will be showcased during the Parade Lap for each race.

AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES POINT STANDINGS

Team

1. Corvette Racing (Corvette) 108
2. BMW Team RLL (BMW) 84
3. **SRT Motorsports (Viper) 81**
4. Paul Miller Racing (Porsche) 42
5. CORE Autosport (Porsche) 32

Driver

1. Oliver Gavin, Tommy Milner 78
2. Dirk Muller 73
3. **Dominik Farnbacher, Marc Goossens 73**
4. Antonio Garcia, Jan Magnussen 72
5. Bill Auberlen, Maxime Martin 54
8. **Jonathan Bomarito, Kuno Wittmer 37**

FOLLOW THE ACTION

- Race Broadcast — 9/1/13 at 12:00 Noon (EDT) on ABC
- Live Streaming — 8/31/13 at 3:30 p.m. (EDT) on ESPN3
- Live Qualifying — 8/30/13 at 4:30 p.m. (EDT) on ESPN3
- Live Timing and Scoring available at ALMS.com.

SRT MOTORSPORTS QUOTES

Gary Johnson – SRT Motorsports Racing Manager

“The response to the Road America win was overwhelming. There were so many SRT enthusiasts, partners and sponsors that took the time to send congratulatory notes – it was certainly time for the team to pick up a win. We’ll continue to fight this season for more podiums, after all our team and drivers have a championship to win.

“Coming off of the Road America weekend, the team is definitely on a high and can’t wait until the Baltimore race. With the race presented by SRT, it’s just further incentive to do well in front of the SRT owners and fans.

“The car set-up at Baltimore should be really close to what we had earlier this season in Long Beach. Immediately after Road America, the team performed some four-post shaker testing in an effort to improve our performance.”

Marc Goossens – No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R

“We proved last year that if you want to have a good result at Baltimore, you have to stay out of trouble. You need to be very patient. We showed at Long Beach that we can do that and have a good result on a street course. Last year at Baltimore was one of the better runs that we had with the SRT Viper GTS-Rs. We ran well there last year but it’s completely different this time with all the developments that we’ve been through. It’s a completely different game now. I think it’s going to be another step forward. It’s one of the street courses that I’ve been to before with this program and I’m looking forward to going back and have an even stronger showing. Hopefully we can continue that string of good results that we have going.”

HOW DIFFICULT IS THE COURSE AT BALTIMORE? “Every street course is very narrow and there’s no room for error. No place is forgiving but I think a street course is even less forgiving. We learned last year that Baltimore is a very bumpy track and if you overdrive the track, it will cost you dearly. The car is a lot better this year so hopefully with extra balance in the car we can dial out oversteer and understeer pretty fast. That should get us up front pretty quick during the weekend.”

ARE THERE MANY PASSING ZONES AT BALTIMORE? A SHORT RACE ON A TRACK WHERE IT’S DIFFICULT TO PASS MUST BE A CHALLENGE. “It is more of a challenge especially if you look back at Long Beach. I’d never been there before. Dominik (Farnbacher) qualified the car on the pole and even though my pace was not as good as everyone else because of lack of experience, there was no chance for others to pass.

“I think the key to success at a street course is to qualify up front and the SRT Motorsports program has been showing this year that we are strong in qualifying. There shouldn’t be any reason for us to not qualify well. If we qualify well, then we’re in a good position for the race because it’s tough to pass on any given street course. There’s not many opportunities to overtake; maybe going into the hairpin because the track is so wide. But then again, if you make your car a little wide on entry of the corner it’s going to be very tough for others to pass and likewise for us to pass other people. Like any race, a lot of it is going to come down to strategy.”

Dominik Farnbacher – No. 91 SRT Viper GTS-R

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO RUN WELL AT BALTIMORE? “Not to hit the wall. Baltimore was quite a challenge for me last year, my first time there. In the second practice, I hit the wall pretty hard and we were sidelined for the rest of the weekend. I don’t have good memories of that (laughs). The track is similar to Long Beach but with more bumps.

“I think qualifying will be a key factor so we’ll be looking for a starting spot up front in the GT Class. I can’t tell yet what that strategy will look like but we will get together with Bill (Riley) and find a solution. I’m really looking forward to the race.

“Everything has changed since we raced at Baltimore last year. Marc (Goossens) had a very good race last year in the 93 car. He and Tommy (Kendall) were very competitive. This year our cars are better, so I think we’ll be very competitive.”

HOW BIG OF A FACTOR IS THE RACE DISTANCE AT BALTIMORE? “It’s basically a sprint race. In order to run well you have to have a good strategy. I think most of the teams will pit just once because it’s a two-hour race. The best situation is to qualify up front and be the first off pit road so everyone has to overtake you and we know that it’s difficult to overtake at Baltimore. It comes down to strategy – good entrance and exit of pit road and how well you manage the tires.”

Kuno Wittmer – No. 93 Pennzoil Ultra SRT Viper GTS-R

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES ABOUT RACING AT BALTIMORE? “Baltimore is a very difficult street course. Contrary to other street courses such as Long Beach or Toronto where you have some pretty long straightaways, Baltimore has very, very short straights so there’s a lot of shifting going on and the bumps are critical. It’s a very tricky course and we’re definitely going to have to dial those Vipers in quickly in the limited amount of practice that we have.

“Luckily we’re going back to a track that we competed at in 2012 and we came away with a pretty good result last year. Road America is a perfect example of the improvements that we’ve made. We feel pretty good about a good result in Baltimore but it’s going to be difficult. There are a lot of walls and the track is not forgiving at all.”

THERE APPEARS TO BE NO ROOM FOR ERROR AT BALTIMORE. IS THAT WHAT STANDS OUT MOST TO YOU ABOUT THE RACE TRACK? “There is zero tolerance for error at Baltimore. Every lap has to be precise from practice to qualifying and in the race. We can’t put a wheel wrong. We’re winding down on this championship right now and it’s going to be critical for the 91 car to score points. For the 93 car, we’re going to score the maximum points that we can and improve our position in the team and manufacturer’s championship.”

THIS IS ONE OF THE SHORTEST RACES OF THE SEASON. DOES THAT PUT AN EVEN GREATER EMPHASIS ON THE TEAM TO NOT MAKE A MISTAKE? “It’s going to be absolutely critical that everybody is on their A game. It comes down to the masterminding of Bill Riley, Matt Bejnarowicz and Gary Johnson. For the four drivers it’s going to be critical that we hit our marks. At two hours it’s one of the shortest races on the calendar so you’ve still got to push hard. The other manufacturers are going to ring their A game, we’ve got to go out and better them.”

Jonathan Bomarito – No. 93 Pennzoil Ultra SRT Viper GTS-R

HOW MUCH EXPERIENCE DO YOU HAVE AT BALTIMORE? “Zero. I have never been to Baltimore but I’ve done quite a bit of racing on street courses. When I was in Formula Atlantic, we followed the Champ Car Series at the time and they did a lot of street courses so I’ve got quite a bit of good street course experience. It’s just going to be the matter of learning a new track.”

AS A DRIVER, WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PREPARE WHEN YOU’RE GOING TO A TRACK YOU’VE NEVER BEEN TO BEFORE? “The majority comes from my teammates past experience there. The SRT Viper GTS-Rs raced there last year so they’ve seen the course and they have some data from that race. Between talking to them, getting some of their notes from track data acquisition and trying to find some onboard video on the internet, all those things prepares you pretty well for that first practice session.”

BECAUSE THE BALTIMORE EVENT IS A SHORT RACE, DOES THAT PUT MORE PRESSURE ON YOU AS A DRIVER? “Everything has to be perfect for this race. If you have a mistake on a pit stop and it puts you to the back, you don’t have time to make it up. Everything is super-important: no mistakes from the driver, perfect pit stops and good qualifying. Qualifying is really important for these short street courses.”

YOU PRACTICE EARLY ON FRIDAY MORNING AND THEN QUALIFY LATE FRIDAY AFTERNOON. HOW BIG OF A VARIABLE IS THAT? “It definitely will be different. The street courses change rapidly through the course of the weekend. The grip levels change and the track temperatures change drastically so you just kind of plan ahead. Fortunately we’ve seen it once already this year at Long Beach, so we have a little bit of experience about how that changes the car balance and where we need to go with the setup. Hopefully we’re one step ahead of the track.”

Bill Riley – Vice President and Chief Engineer, Riley Technologies

“Any time you go to a street circuit it’s difficult because there’s no room for error. If the setup is bad and the car goes off course, you’re going to do big damage. It’s pretty risky at a street circuit. Last year at Baltimore I think we turned a corner and started to move up a little bit. I’m excited about heading back to Baltimore.”

HOW BIG OF A FACTOR IS THE LENGTH OF THE RACE? IT’S ONE OF THE SHORTER RACES OF THE YEAR. DOES IT PUT MORE EMPHASIS ON EVERYTHING RIGHT FROM THE START OF PRACTICE ON FRIDAY MORNING? “With the race only two hours long, you tend to do more risky things with strategy. At Long Beach it did and didn’t really work out for us. We got on our first podium but we didn’t get higher than third. There is some room for some risky strategy with the race being so short. You have to have good momentum and you have to qualify well.”

LAST YEAR AT BALTIMORE WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT THIS TEAM SHOWED IT COULD BE COMPETITIVE. HOW IMPORTANT WAS THAT RACE TO THE PROGRAM? “Well, I kind of breathed a sigh of relief, just like the last race at Road America. It was like okay, this car will be competitive and this team will win races. The last race at Road America was where we got that other part, where we got that box (win) checked. We just have to move on being consistent.”

Matt Bejnarowicz – Lead Engineer, SRT Motorsports

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES OF THE STREET CIRCUIT AT BALTIMORE? WHAT ARE YOU PREPARING FOR FROM AN ENGINEERING PERSPECTIVE? “The challenge of Baltimore is always the rough surface. The track has broken concrete and is pretty rough so it’s a big challenge to make sure the car is compliant enough to deal with the street surface. There are even railroad tracks involved, so you run a fine line to make the car soft and compliant enough to handle those types of bumps. On the flip side, if you make the car too soft you struggle to keep the chassis off the ground and to make the car responsive enough to handle the turns.

“Last year they paved over the railroad tracks and put down asphalt a couple days before the race. Anticipating this type of unique preparation of the circuit is probably equally challenging to everything else.”

HOW BIG OF A CHALLENGE IS THE SHORTER DISTANCE OF THE RACE? “ALMS races are always sprint races, because the competition is so close. It creates pressure to get the car dialed in quickly. It’s not that we don’t have a similar amount of practice sessions as other races but typically when you go to a street course there’s probably going to be a red flag or a car stopped on the track requiring the session to be halted or cut short. We have two one-hour practice sessions scheduled and in all likelihood we’ll probably get half of that time. We hope it doesn’t happen but typically there’s nothing you can do about that. I think that really puts the pressure on the team and the engineering staff to get the car right before the race.

“During the race it’s pretty hectic. There are a lot of different strategy calls that you have to make because it’s only a two-hour race. You really have to be on top of your game to make the right decisions when a yellow comes out or determine the right time to pit to win this race.”

THE RACE AT BALTIMORE IS A COMPANION EVENT WITH THE INDY CARS, WHICH HAVE A DIFFERENT TIRE COMPOUND. IS THAT AN ADDITIONAL VARIABLE? “It can. It really depends on what your tires can live with. Fortunately Michelin tires are probably the best racing tire in the class right now so we would expect them to tolerate those conditions pretty well. You can experience issues where non-compatible rubbers on the track result in a loss of grip. We’ve been with IndyCar before and it doesn’t seem to create much of a problem with Michelins.

“When we start our practice sessions, there’s no rubber down, the track is green and dirty. You lose almost that first half-hour of testing just cleaning the track off before you can make any real decisions on handling. You have to anticipate this to make sure you don’t run down the wrong path early on.”

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